

# GUIDE TO

# *snowmobile safety*

## IN MICHIGAN

PROVIDED BY:

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Dear Snowmobile Enthusiast:

Michigan is truly a Winter Wonderland! Postcard-pretty scenery, crisp temperatures and snow - lots of snow - lure families from every corner of our state into the Great Outdoors each winter. Snowmobile enthusiasts in particular have cause to enjoy the exhilaration and adventure of Michigan winters. With a network of 6,100 miles of groomed trails, and exciting terrain through forest and field, our state promises unparalleled snowmobiling fun.



Michigan registers nearly 300,000 snowmobiles each year, more than any other state in the nation. Our state is also a popular snowmobile destination for thousands of visitors. With so many enjoying Michigan's winter playground, safe and responsible driving is essential. This newsletter is designed to provide you with an overview of snowmobile safety in Michigan. Knowing the rules, and driving with care for others and the land helps ensure the safety of all, while enhancing the sport. As you take to the trails, I hope you and your family enjoy Michigan's winter splendor this season.

Sincerely,

**Michelle A. McManus**

State Senator  
35th District

# BEFORE YOU GO

## Registration and Trail Permits

Unless exempt, a snowmobile owner must register the vehicle with the Secretary of State and obtain a trail permit sticker from the Department of Natural Resources. Nonresidents must display a valid registration from their state or province, or be registered in Michigan.

Registration decals cover a three-year period and must be displayed on the vehicle. Contact a Secretary of State branch office or visit the department web site at **[www.michigan.gov/sos](http://www.michigan.gov/sos)**. Click on Owning a Vehicle and then Recreational Vehicles for more information.

In addition to vehicle registration, an owner must purchase a snowmobile trail permit sticker. These annual pre-printed permit decals are also affixed to the sled and available at the following:

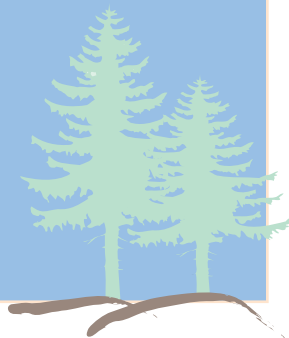
- ❄ Online at **[www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)**. Click on the On-line Hunting and Fishing Licenses box.
- ❄ Through the Michigan Snowmobile Association. Visit the web site at **[www.msasnow.org](http://www.msasnow.org)** or call 1-800-246-0260.
- ❄ At one of the nine DNR Operations Service Centers. To find the nearest location, go to the DNR web site at **[www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)**. Click on Contact DNR on the top bar and select Operations Service Centers.

Revenue generated from the registration and trail permit fees is used to develop and maintain Michigan's storied network of snowmobile trails. In fact, these funds provide more than \$2.5 million each year for trail grooming.

## ***Please Remember...***

### **SLOW DOWN!**

Speed is a contributing factor in nearly all fatal accidents. Keep your snowmobile under control.



# ***SAFETY EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST***

- ✓ Insulated snowmobile suit, gloves and boots
- ✓ Flashlight and flare gun
- ✓ Tool repair kit
- ✓ Waterproof matches
- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Trail map and compass
- ✓ Aluminized or emergency blanket
- ✓ Fire-starting equipment
- ✓ High energy trail food
- ✓ Cell phone



## ***LESSONS IN SNOWMOBILE SAFETY***

Safe and responsible driving adds to the overall enjoyment of the sport. Given the hazards of weather and terrain, all snowmobile operators are encouraged to take a training course to increase safety and awareness.

Young operators, 12 to 17 years of age, who wish to operate a snowmobile alone, must successfully complete a snowmobile safety course. They must also have a valid snowmobile safety certificate in their immediate possession, if:

- ❄ They are operating a snowmobile without direct supervision of a person 21 years of age or older; and
- ❄ They are crossing a highway or street.

Please visit [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr) to search for snowmobile safety courses in your community. Click on the Quick Link to Hunter Safety Classes and select the snowmobile option.

***Please Remember...***

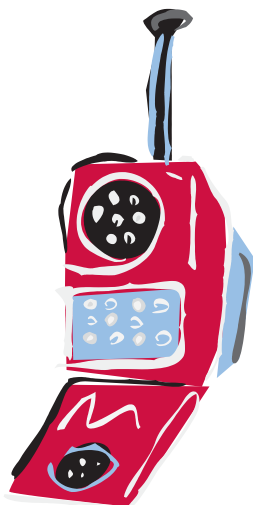
**DON'T DRINK ALCOHOL!**

Alcohol impairs judgment and slows reaction time.



# ACCIDENT REPORTING

Safe and defensive driving helps prevent accidents. However, if an accident does occur, Michigan law is clear: An operator of a snowmobile involved in an accident resulting in the injury or death of a person, or property damage estimated at \$100 or more, must immediately notify law enforcement within the county of the accident.



# SAFE RIDING HINTS

- ❄ Always keep your machine in top mechanical condition.
- ❄ Dress appropriately.
- ❄ Never ride alone. Try to travel in groups.
- ❄ Avoid, when possible, traveling across frozen bodies of water.
- ❄ Never operate in a single file when crossing frozen bodies of water.
- ❄ Stay on marked trails to avoid the hazards of running into chains, cables and gates.
- ❄ Always be alert to avoid fences and long strung wires.
- ❄ Never operate on a street or highway.
- ❄ Always look for depressions in the snow.
- ❄ At an intersection, come to a complete stop, raise off the seat and look for traffic.
- ❄ Always check the weather before departing.
- ❄ Leave a travel plan with someone.
- ❄ Never blaze a new trail at night. Many fixed objects such as trees, fences, stumps and culverts are hidden by snowfall or drifting.

***Please  
Remember...***

**KNOW THE  
CONDITIONS!**

**Be well prepared for  
any contingency.**



# ***IT IS ILLEGAL TO OPERATE A SNOWMOBILE IN MICHIGAN. . .***

- ❄ While under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- ❄ At a rate of speed that is unsafe or unreasonable for existing conditions.
- ❄ In a forest nursery or any designated wild, wilderness or natural area
- ❄ Within 100 feet of any building or person on the frozen surface of public waters except at the minimum speed required to maintain forward motion.
- ❄ Within 100 feet of a home between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m. except at the minimum speed required to maintain forward motion.
- ❄ On private property without the consent of the landowner, as required by the Recreational Trespass Act.
- ❄ In a public hunting area during the November 15-30 firearm deer season from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- ❄ While transporting a bow unless it is unstrung or encased, or a firearm unless it is unloaded and encased.
- ❄ On a cemetery or burial ground, an airport, a public or private parking lot, a public highway or street, within 100 feet of a slide, ski or skating area, a railroad or a railroad right-of-way.
- ❄ To chase, harass or kill any wild bird or animal.

**The Michigan Snowmobile Regulations guide available from the Department of Natural Resources provides additional information on Michigan snowmobile rules and regulations. Access it at [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr). Click on Recreation and Camping and then Snowmobiling. Or pick up a printed copy at many Secretary of State branch offices.**

***Please  
Remember...***



**WEAR A HELMET!**

**Anyone operating or riding on a snowmobile must wear a U. S. Department of Transportation-approved crash helmet.**

# SNOWMOBILE TRAIL MAPS

Michigan's vast and scenic network of snowmobile trails draws sled enthusiasts from all over. An overview of the trail system by region can be accessed at the DNR web site [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr). More detailed trail riding maps are available by contacting a regional tourism organization. Groups in the 35th Senate District include:

- ❄ Houghton Lake Area Tourism and Convention Bureau Roscommon County  
989-366-8474 or 800-676-5330 (Monday-Saturday 9-5)
- ❄ Traverse City Convention and Visitors Bureau Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties  
800-TRAVERS  
(Monday-Friday 9-5)
- ❄ Cadillac Area  
Visitors Bureau  
Wexford County  
231-775-9776  
or 800-22-LAKES

**This general map of snowmobile trails in the 35th Senate District may be helpful in planning a day trip or weekend getaway to enjoy the winter beauty of our North Woods.**

